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ABSTRACT

With a view on analyzing the deeper trends in the European discourse that will shape the European Union's (EU's) future, a study examined 121 speeches made by EU political leaders over the period 1985-1997 and concorded and statisticized which words were used, how often, where, and when with the help of a computer-aided content analysis engine. Under pressure toward novelty, the discourse that buoys the EU should--and does--accumulate symbolic notions. The creation of a success story such as the European construction represents a potential for optimism and energy, yet only narrative energy changes, even peters out. The themes around which the European Union is organized must--and do--show something of the European impulse: Concern is presently with unemployment (less with security and cooperation), with institutions (less on citizenry), and with the Europe of regions. (Contains 2 tables, 8 figures, and 84 references.) (Author/NKA)

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The words that buoy the European impulse

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RUNNING HEAD: Europe in words

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Abstract

With a view on analyzing the deeper trends in the European discourse that will shape EU's future, we have 121 speeches made by EU political leaders, over the period 1985-1997, concorded and statisticized –which words are used, how often, where, and when– with the help of a computer-aided content analysis engine. Under pressure toward novelty, the discourse that buoys the EU should –and does– accumulate symbolic notions. The creation of a success story such as the European construction represents a potential for optimism and energy, yet only narrative energy changes, even peters out. The themes around which the European Union is organized must –and do– show something of the European impulse: Concern is presently with unemployment (less with security and cooperation), with institutions (less on citizenry), and with the Europe of regions.

Key words: COMPUTER-SUPPORTED CONTENT ANALYSIS, EUROPEAN UNION, PRESSURE TOWARD NOVELTY, READABILITY, POLITICAL SPEECHES, SYMBOLIC CONSTRUCTION, VOCABULARY UNIQUENESS

The words that buoy the European impulse

Most European studies are principally about economics, politics, and laws; this one is about speeches made over the period 1985-1997 by political leaders of the European Union (EU), Presidents Delors (1985-1994) and Santer (1995-). Language is after all our most successful tool for constituting reality (Bruner, 1986, p. 8): One cannot have Europe without words, a reference to Nelson Goodman's "no world without words" (1978, p. 6). We set up shop in current affairs of institutions that humans create and talk about, but disciplined by text analysis. "What kind of Europe is represented in these speeches and what kind is looming ahead?" is the heart of the study we are concerned with here. There are two logical moves in our conception. One is from the construction of Europe to the words that made it. The other is from these words to the reconstruction of the trajectory of these words through time.

It is of the inherited past of the EU that we need to sketch a short take first. The EU, originally European (Economic) Community, arose from the ashes of World War II. Its goal was, as it still is, to ensure peace, prosperity and a new start for a continent whose political and economic foundations had disintegrated (Pierson, 1996; Yakemtchouk, 1989). The precursor of today's EU was the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), which came into being in 1952. The objectives of the six founding members (Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands) were to implement European integration and a lasting peace by pooling their coal and steel production. Achieving the goal of European unity through economic integration was further enhanced by the six countries agreeing, in 1957, the terms of the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) and the European Economic Community (EEC). By the end of the 60's, three new targets were defined, developing policies of political cooperation and economic union, enlarging the Community to new members, and achieving the internal market (Konig, 1996). These objectives would be fulfilled within the following decades (Baun, 1996; Ross, 1996; Urwin, 1995), with a special attention given to them under the Delors and Santer's presidencies, justifying our choice of this period of the EU construction. Decades later, because of uncertainties in view, e.g.,

social, political, and monetary, the EU could now be folding into a shadow time that makes the present study the better timed.

The knowledge gained by interrogating the EU in words cuts both backward and forward: It rests on memory (the inherited past to be organized) to make expectations (the future): We planned the present study to include two objectives, to inform and to predict. The general idea is to analyze the deeper trends in the European discourse that will shape EU's future. This paper finds its prompts in the following argument. There is enough information in the texts available to historians to add intelligibility to archives; there should also be sufficient information for political psychologists, using the quantitative methods of text analysis, to understand the changes of thought over time in contemporary speeches. The major advantage of analyzing those words that are making the EU is that such monitoring of speeches gives us firsthand experience of the content whereof the EU is made. A fine start in this quest is about the sense in which the European construction is accompanied by parallel changes in the words used to express it. From the confrontation between the official version of the European construction and a text-based version of that construction, we expect to reap two kinds of benefits, for the political psychology of the EU and for political psychology *tout court*.

First, because the received version of the European construction and the text-based one might be out of sync, unexpected fractures or unanalyzed connections in the European discourse may be evidenced; conversely, such a confrontation allows one to evaluate the extent to which apparently genuine developments in the EU are merely variations on an old theme. The expected outcome is a new version of the construction of the EU distinct from a myth-making process. Secondly, a renewal of attention can be noted recently for the question of identities both in the work of social and behavioral scientists (Tajfel, 1981; Turner et al., 1994) and in that of historians of the EU (Anderson, 1992; Girault, 1994; Pocock, 1991). This is particularly so in view of the increasing distance (including increasing income inequalities) created between highly abstract, knowledgeable, and symbolic spheres (as in the economic milieus or the financial markets) and spheres of society concerned with basic questions of fag end survival and low paid services (Lasch, 1995; Reich, 1991). If European elites speak

mainly to one another, the question is that of the suitability of an estranging European construction to respond to the quest for European identity of not so elites.

Three hypotheses and a methodology for monitoring the words that made the EU

The problem facing text analysis is how to characterize the discourse of the European construction. This is obviously a question that addresses the creativity of the EU leaders and their staffs who, simultaneously, have to assimilate in their speeches the massive changes that marked the period. A serviceable concept to understand what makes a text change is pressure toward novelty. Martindale (1975, 1990) has convincingly argued in favor cf pressure toward novelty as indeed a governing drive behind literary and scientific text (Hogenraad et al., 1992, 1995b, c), whether from the beginning to the end of a literary work, an author's lifetime, or a literary epoch. What can I write that has not yet been written is the question that any writer, political or otherwise, has to face before starting to write: "Every great poet must inevitably innovate upon the examples of his predecessors", as Shelley (1821/1970, p. 169) put it. In every respect, today's EU results from a constructive process consciously and rationally elaborated by successive groups of men and women dedicated to its construction (Ross, 1995). What else has the EU done these last 50 years but built the theoretical foundations of its program, including a new symbol for its new currency, the "euro"? If this is so, as it seems it is, then it is reasonable to expect increasingly symbolic constructions in the speeches –the condensation chamber of the EU– that run in parallel to its construction. More, only an increasingly symbolic construction of the speeches can grant European statements the universality they need to travel unspoiled. Readers may already have seen hypotheses coming, and text-analytic methods to tally with them: Pressure toward novelty in European theory-building is a brew potent enough to crank the cognitive, affective, and thematic contents of the European political speeches.

We hypothesize first that the speeches that buoy the European construction will accumulate symbolic and conceptual notions, being made to wonder at the same time about the limitations in the use of symbolic notions in political discourses. First, there are intrinsic limitations to the capacity for abstraction of the human mind (Thorngate, 1990). Secondly,

abstract words are difficult to understand (Hayes, 1992). As abstract words do a lot of work in the European theory-building, its language may become ever more unreadable until a point of relative relapses when the abstractions in fashion lose their efficacy as economical tools of thought, either because new events cannot be explained by them, or because they are challenged by new facts. Thirdly, reduced circumstances due to geopolitical contingencies may at times shackle an intellectual construction. For example, the BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) crisis, beyond its damaging effects on the health of citizens, presumably jeopardized the capacity of Europeans to identify themselves to the European ideal for some time. At this point, less abstract and more metaphoric language is likely to be put forward in order to turn back to base (till symbolic thinking comes in force again).

The second hypothesis concerns the affect that the creation of a success story necessarily generates. The European construction is, as any other great visionary project like that of science (Snow, 1959/1993), the source of a formidable potential for optimism and excitement. Despite the dismay of our societies in the end of this century (Galbraith, 1992; Glyn-Jones, 1996; Hogenraad & Grosbois, 1997; Kennedy, 1989, 1993), the coupling of the two processes, pressure toward novelty and the creation of a success story, makes one expect the project of the European construction to reflect a massive dose of a priori optimism. The pattern of change in pleasantness and arousal of the words that the European discourse is made up of should indicate something of that achievement.

The third hypothesis concerns the themes that make the European theory-building. A theme is a higher-order label, i.e., a conceptual construct "put together from discontinuous elements in the text" (Rimmon-Kennan, 1995, p. 14; see also Sollors, 1993). Linking the elements is achieved by the lexical and statistical engine (see the methods section), generalizing and labeling the theme being the analyst's role. Recurrently saying different things about an object that embraces them all defines the notion of "semantic aboutness" (Goodman, 1972, pp. 246-272). We want to mine the meanings of the themes (different words united by a cohesive principle to make sense) about which the EU organized itself. The benefit for political psychology is the possibility of analyzing the process by which EU knowledge is made and of separating conceptual constructs that are bracing (because of

their novelty) from those that are about to being removed from the stage (for cause of boredom or disinterest).

We tackled these questions by examining how the speeches of former President Delors and President Santer changed about Europe during the period 1985-1997. We focused on 93 public speeches made by Delors between 1985 and 1994, and 28 made by Santer between 1995 and 1997. The tradition of analyzing political discourse is a long-honed one in social and behavioral science (Lasswell & Kaplan, 1950/1963; Namenwirth & Weber, 1987; North et al., 1963, to name a few). The field has been picking up steam since these pioneering works (see for example Gallhofer & Saris, 1996; Hunt, 1997; Levasseur & Kevin, 1996).

Methods

Monitoring texts

The Delors and Santer speeches were those that were available, in French or in a French translation, early March 1997 at "http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/cgi/rapcgi.ksh". Some early speeches by Delors, not available at this address, were scanned. The first Delors text is dated 25 February 1985, the last one, 5 December 1994; the first Santer's text is dated 9 May 1995, the last one, 28 April 1997. We had all these speeches (N = 121) concorded and statisticized –which words were used, how often, where, and when. These 121 speeches were further classified as to the three major audiences they were addressed to: 52 speeches addressed to the parliamentaries and other official bodies of the institution itself (in Brussels, Luxembourg, or Strasbourg), 50 addressed to non-EU institutions but located within the EU (as for example the G7 Conference on Employment addressed by Santer on 1st April 1996 in Lille, France), and a last batch of 19 speeches addressed to audiences outside the frontiers of the EU (as a speech addressed by Delors to the Council on Foreign Relations on 24 April 1991 in New York). The 52 speeches addressed to the EU institution were dubbed institutional, the remaining 69 ones, non-institutional. A study like the present one might be better served if, when it is relevant to do so, we contrast the target speeches with other ones similar in most respects, yet different in a few. To this effect, we analyzed a set of 34

governmental declarations made by successive Belgian governments over the period 1946-1995 (102,942 words) and three State of the Union addresses ("http://www.lawresearch.com/history.htm") made by President Clinton in 1994, 1995, and 1996 (23,245 words).

Text analysis could only be achieved through a versatile engine tuned to snorkeling in the texts. The PROTAN (PROTocol Analyzer) software (Hogenraad et al., 1995a) was used to carry out these analyses. Content analysis with PROTAN involves at least the following three procedural steps, i.e., entering the text, pruning it, and arranging it into a frequency table. After the text has been entered into its natural sequential order, pruning somewhat brings down the number of different word entries. Table I summarizes the frequency characteristics of the speeches considered.

Insert Table I about here

Most content analysis does not stop with counting words. In PROTAN, the two procedures for analyzing the content of a text are the categorizing one (concept-driven) and the contextual one (data-driven). The concept-driven procedure is based on conceptual dictionaries –words with similar meanings that covary– while the data-driven one allows identification of the main themes –words with different meanings that covary– present in a discourse (Iker & Klein, 1974; Weber, 1983). We use both procedures here. *Categorizing* words is a quasi-experimental procedure in the sense that, having selected a list of relevant words –such as a list of abstract words– that fit a given hypothesis, we retrieve from the text only those words that match the list. Categorizing words consists of comparing all the words of the Delors and Santer corpus (121 speeches, 93 by Delors and 28 by Santer) to all the words of a dictionary (usually organized into some number of categories). A dictionary, in textual analysis, is no more than a semantic trawl that we drag through the text: looking for matches between words in a dictionary and words in a text. The words of the text then either are caught in the trawl, or they aren't. When we apply a dictionary to a text, we consider only the text words that are caught in the trawl. The shape and size of the trawl characterize each

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dictionary. Each time a match is found between a word in the dictionary and a word in the text, the event is recorded in the unit in which it occurred. When all the comparisons have been made, recorded matches are totaled by category. The value of such a procedure lies unquestionably in the value of the comparison lists (dictionaries). Three dictionaries, all in French, were used in the present study, two to assess pressure toward novelty in texts, and one to evaluate their degree of affect (pleasantness and arousal).

To ferret out pressure toward novelty, we first employed Martindale's (1975) Regressive Imagery Dictionary (RID for short). The RID is a content-analytic measure of two basic cognitive processes, the primordial and symbolic thought contents. In its French version, the RID pits 2,019 words tagged in concrete (primordial) thought content against 745 ones tagged in symbolic thought. Primordial thought processes are driven by fantasy and free association, and by the ignorance of what are institutions and societies. These processes are nontemporal cognitive modes that suspend logical and critical thought. Conceptual thought processes are called symbolic and abstract by contrast with primordial thought processes that do not go beyond the world of appearances, sensate, percepts, and other regressive cognitive mechanisms. Symbolic thought processes are time-oriented, involving logical and critical thinking. They are effective each time we manipulate representations. The construct validity of the RID has been established by measuring the presence of primordial and symbolic thought content in texts supposed to contain them. The folktale of less versus more developed societies for example contains more primordial thought content (Martindale, 1976) while words belonging to the primordial thought content are characterized by older dates-of-entries into the language (Benjafield & Muckenheim, 1989; see also Martindale, 1979, 1990). The Ottawa dictionary of imagery (Desrochers & Bergeron, 1992) was further used as a backup of Martindale's RID; it is made up of 1,916 French nouns for each of which we know its weight of imagery. This weight results from ratings of the ease with which a given word elicits a mental image. Weights are reported as values (multiplied by 10) on 7-point scales.

Affect (pleasantness and arousal) was assessed using a dictionary composed of 2,998 entries. This dictionary (Leleu, 1987) results from ratings of evaluation (pleasant-unpleasant) and arousal (active-passive) on 7-point intensity scales. Its construct validity

rests upon the principle that the weight of a text on some dimension can be derived from the weight of its component words on that dimension, as was shown by Johnson-Laird and Oatley (1989), Miall (1988, 1992), and Bestgen (1994).

Comparing a text to a semantic dictionary is not the only way to extract information from a text in PROTAN. Another powerful scheme (*contextual*) consists of analyzing the statistical relationships words of a text have with each other. However, where categorizing words puts a dictionary between the analyst and the text, the contextual scheme for analyzing a text allows no such cordon sanitaire between the analyst and the text (because the relations between the words of the text lie in the text and not in some intermediate instrument). The word-word contiguity approach is expounded upon in Iker and Klein (1974) and Weber (1983). The purpose of analyzing the traceries of connections between text words is to gain knowledge of the patterns of distribution of soft-fingered themes as the speeches unfold. The idea is that the themes that characterize a text can be made to appear by analysis of the contiguities existing between given sets of words (Ide, 1989; Iker, 1974a; Iker & Klein, 1974; Klein, 1976). Sufficient information, explain Iker and Klein (1974, p. 430), exists within the word and within the temporal associations among and between words to allow data-generated elicitation of major content themes. Words are selected by a procedure that emphasizes words that are highly correlated with other words (Iker, 1974b).

Readability

We plumb readability in PROTAN through the Gunning index (Gunning, 1968; Mailloux et al., 1995). This index considers both the average sentence length and the average word length. This combined measure of average sentence length and average word length is then multiplied by a coefficient of .4. This coefficient yields a good approximation of the grade system in the North-American educational structure when applied to texts with known graded reading difficulty (Gunning, 1968, p. 38). A text is more difficult to read as its Gunning index increases. Indices of 8, 12, and 15 correspond respectively to easy, difficult, and very difficult texts.

A tool to hatch into the significant moments in the EU construction

Formal acts of commemoration, says Stern (1992, p. 217), are not always the best occasion for arriving at historical truth, for they often serve to create myths. We examined factor scores for landmarks from within the actual data using the CART (Classification And Regression Trees) system of statistical decision-making (Breiman et al., 1993; Efron & Tibshirani, 1991; McKenzie & Low, 1992). CART belongs to the family of nonparametric techniques aimed at building trees by recursive statistical decisions. In plain language, CART recursively tests its own decisions on portions of the data to see if its decisions are not themselves in error. Tree-building is particularly appropriate for, as in the present case, uncovering multiple unspecified fault lines –significant moments– that may be hidden in the data.

CART is a tree-building technique which we expect will split each series of factor scores into subgroups that are homogeneous regarding the content of the factor. In other words, the goal of a regression tree is to partition data into homogeneous (low standard deviations) terminal nodes. CART first grows as large a tree as possible, subject to the default restriction that no subgroup with five or fewer observations (speeches) can be further split. When a maximum tree is built, CART starts pruning the tree combining subgroups until it finds the smallest tree that has an error-rate within one standard error of the error rate of the largest tree that was originally grown.

Results

A series of speeches has an inherent temporal order, which may cause us to suspect biasing effects due to the presence of serial dependencies (autocorrelations) in the texts (Hogenraad et al., 1997). Before carrying out polynomial regression (Cohen & Cohen, 1975, pp. 213-231), we removed any autocorrelational dependencies from the series (Gottman, 1981). The effect of autocorrelation is to inflate or deflate the real differences that may exist among different parts of text being compared. The solution consists of removing effects due to autocorrelation, even if the latter are not statistically significant (Crosbie, 1993; Hogenraad

et al., 1997). We used the SAS procedure AUTOREG (SAS Institute, 1993) to detect and remove first- and higher-order autocorrelations from the series.

The tally of the rate of conceptual thought content in the 121 discourses of Delors and Santer yields an elaborate quartic profile composed of a sequence of two U-shaped positive evolutions [R^2 = .10, $F(4, 116)$ =, 3.19, $p < .05$]. However, this change over time seems essentially due to the 52 institutional speeches [R^2 = .14, $F(3, 48) = 2.71$, $p < .05$] (Figure 1) while the 69 non-institutional ones exhibit no such change. Tallying the rate of primordial thought content in the same 52 institutional speeches yields a significant change over the passing of time [R^2 = .16, $F(3, 48) = 3.02$, $p < .05$] (Figure 2); the non-institutional speeches too exhibit change in primordial thought content over time [R^2 = 14, $F(3, 65) = 3.44$, $p < .05$] (not shown in Figure 2).

As a comparison, President Clinton's three State of the Union addresses for 1994, 1995, and 1996 average scores of thought processes are 7.1 and 11.3 respectively in the primordial and symbolic modes. Figures for 34 Belgian Governmental Declarations from 1946 to 1995 are 6.3 and 10.7 in the same modes, and 6.4 and 9.9 for the 121 speeches made by Presidents Delors and Santer.

Insert Figures 1 and 2 about here

The polynomial analysis of variable "arousal" yields a significant U-shaped profile followed by an inverted U-shaped one [R^2 = .23, $F(3, 65) = 6.50$, $p < .001$) for the non-institutional speeches (Figure 3) and for the total (not shown). Finally, the Ottawa dictionary of imagery uncovers a degradation of the imagery [R^2 = .07, $F(1, 65) = 4.82$, $p < .05$] in the non-institutional speeches (Figure 4) and for the total (not shown). Note that two environmental speeches on forests protection by Delors, on 7 February 1986 and 17 September 1991, were withdrawn from the regression because that theme accumulated high imagery terms (forest, tree, etc.) resulting in an exceptionally high level of imagery (outliers).

Insert Figures 3 and 4 about here

The profile of readability (Figure 5) of the 121 speeches showed an inverted U-shaped curve [R^2 = .22, $F(4, 116) = 8.06$, $p < .001$]. Readability has deteriorated from 1987 to 1992 but improved after that. It is a strength of the Santer Presidency (1995-) that it has done readability some immediate good: There is a statistically significant difference (Tukey test) between the mean readability of the Delors (M = 16.94, n = 93) and Santer speeches (M = 15.05, n = 28). The readability profiles of the institutional versus non-institutional speeches are similar. However, given the generally low levels of readability of the speeches, there is ground for doubt that European elites write for anyone else than for one another. It would take highly selective quotations to sustain the view that either Delors or Santer's estranged sentences have in view a larger audience in which not so elites can share the European impulse with them. Incidentally, the mean readability value of the three Clinton's State of the Union addresses is 9.94, which compares very favorably with the readability value of 17.27 of the 34 Belgian governmental declarations (or 16.94 of Delors or even 15.05 of Santer).

The rate of uniqueness of the vocabulary is the ratio of the number of original words per year –words that never appeared before nor after a given year– to the total number of words for that year; this ratio is further centered on the average uniqueness score computed over all the years. The rate of vocabulary uniqueness of the 52 institutional speeches, aggregated into 12 years (Figure 6) (no speech was available in this category for the year 1987), shows an increase in vocabulary originality. One may observe *en passant* the towering increase in uniqueness of the year 1989, and the expected increase in uniqueness of the year 1995, with the new Presidency of Santer. The speech given by Delors in Strasbourg on 17 January 1989 at the European Parliament on the guidelines for the European Commission and his press conference on the European Monetary Committee Report in Luxemburg on 17 April 1989 are examples of such uniqueness of vocabulary. The speech on the European Council of Madrid before the European Council in Strasbourg on 13 December 1995 is an example of Santer's uniqueness of vocabulary in 1995. At the opposite, vocabulary

uniqueness of the 69 non-institutional speeches, aggregated into 13 years (Figure 7), exhibits a regular decrease: Over the years, the two Presidents of the European Union tend to be less creative in the words they use in addressing non-institutional audiences. Delors' speech at the "Sylva" conference (Paris, 7 February 1986) epitomizes originality of speech addressed to non-institutional audiences (for that year).

Insert Figures 5, 6, and 7 about here

Meeting Delors and Santer on their own terms: The management of EU knowledge

Meeting European leaders on their own terms is undertaken in the co-word analysis of the speeches. Frequent occurrences of stock phrases in the speeches cause many words to be systematically present together within the same speech (clichés such as "Governors of Central Banks", "central and oriental Europe", "Single European Act", "common interests", "veterinary embargo" and others). Such co-occurrences, when systematic, are enough to generate a factor dimension by themselves. A two-step procedure was developed to avoid generating spurious factor dimensions. First, we ran a cluster analysis on a batch of 150 words richly associated with each other through the 121 speeches. This analysis allowed us to identify 114 clusters. Some clusters were composed of single words and other ones of two or more words systematically present together (stock phrases). The correlations between the words in clichés were .87 or more. Then, we ran a factor analysis, actually a second-order one, not on the 150 words, but on the 114 clusters obtained from the cluster analysis. The factor analysis of the cluster-cluster correlations between the 114 clusters steered a path between three major themes (Table II). At the risk of foreclosing what additional significance of these three clusters of clusters, we blocked in their meaning using three sets of nouns, respectively "Security vs. Unemployment", "Institutions vs. European Citizenry", and "A Europe of Regions". Bipolar factor 1 ("Security vs. Unemployment", 7.52% of variance) shows a quartic evolution (i.e., two U-shaped profiles) [$R^2 = .15$, $F(4, 116) = 5.17$, $p < .001$]: Concern with security and cooperation, at its highest around 1991 and 1992, is presently

running out of steam, despite multiple, but perhaps patchy, references to Eastern Europe, to the benefit of its opposite on the dimension, unemployment. Factor 2 "Institutions vs. European Citizenry" (7.35% of variance), also a bipolar factor, shows a cubic evolution (i.e., inverted U followed by an U-shaped profile) [R^2 = .14, $F(3, 117) = 6.48$, $p < .001$]: The institutional focus has been high during the Delors-I years (1985-1989), low during the Delors-II years (1990-1995), and then high again during the Santer's Presidency. Note that when the institutional focus is removed from the wings, its polar opposite, dubbed "European citizenry", is put on the stage. Unipolar factor 3 ("A Europe of Regions", 6.15% of variance) [R^2 = .32, $F(2, 118) = 27.35$, $p < .001$] is presently soaring with a strong U-shaped profile (Figure 8) (Ohmae, 1993).

Insert Table II and Figure 8 about here

Decomposing the European construction into homogeneous groups

We paid a second full visit to the three factors by using the CART resampling technique to ferret out the significant change-points in the themes etched out in Figure 8. Factor 1 ("Security vs. Unemployment") splits into a first period, running from 25 February 1985 to and including the declaration made by Santer at the death of the French President Mitterand on 8 January 1996, and into a second period covering the remaining speeches. The first partition is itself split into the speeches before and including that pronounced by Delors on 6 April 1989 (seminar on "Post-1992 Statistical Information Systems", Brussels), and those pronounced after that. The second fault line divides the speeches delivered between 31 January 1996 ("European Agreement to have Confidence in Employment") and 18 February 1997 (speech about the BSE enquiry commission, Strasbourg), and those delivered after 27 February 1997 included (address to the Economic and Social Committee, Brussels).

Dates	Av. loading on Factor 1	n	
25 Feb. 85 - 8 Jan. 96	.12	104	
25 Feb. 85 - 6 Apr. 89	-.44	18	
8 Apr. 89 - 8 Jan. 96	.23		86
31 Jan. 96 - 28 Apr. 97	-.74	17	
31 Jan. 96 - 18 Feb. 97	-1.26	10	
27 Feb. 97 - 28 Apr. 97	.02	7	

Factor 2 ("Institutions vs. European Citizenry") makes a single blur of the period 1985-1997. Factor 3 ("A Europe of Regions") bears the mark of Santer (Jeffery, 1997), even if the last three speeches of Delors, from 14 June to 5 December 1994, belong to the second partition. The theme "A Europe of Regions" is mostly under the average during the Delors years. Give or take three speeches, the split of 90 versus 31 speeches perfectly matches the two Presidencies.

Dates	Av. loading on Factor 3	n
25 Feb. 85 - 28 May 94	-.30	90
14 Jun. 94 - 28 Apr. 97	.89	31

Political narratives have no competitor

Results obtained through data-driven procedures need to be handled with more interpretative tact than those obtained through concept-driven ones. Lo, it is wearing thin to have a single statistical test for each profile of Figure 8 carry the burden of an inference that concerns the thematic history of a whole period. Cohen's (1994) recent paper exposed various myths concerning null hypothesis significance testing, with Bakan (1966) having earlier exposed the same myths (see also Abelson, 1997). The point is that both Bakan and Cohen agreed upon the value of replication studies, as are for example being explored by Thompson (1995) to compensate for the "once-ness" of every inference model, which, for want of being repeatable, is one up from rune-reading. But how can one repeat a unique

historical event such as the appearance of a specific theme in the Delors and Santer's series of speeches? Answers are not forthcoming, conclusions, not easily jumped to, and should not.

The analysis can be taken one step further. A partial solution is provided by the SIMSTAT resampling algorithm (Péladeau, 1996), in which one considers each resampling as an "objective possibility" (Kiser & Levi, 1996, pp. 187-207; Weber, 1949, pp. 49-112) in the sense that each event in the resampling did happen, but not necessarily at this time. We treated the regression data in Figure 8 as if they were the population, recreated 200 samples from it, and calculated from such samples the estimators we were concerned with, i.e., polynomial regressions. This methodology, a.k.a. bootstrap simulation, has been described by Efron and Tibshirani (1991), Péladeau and Lacouture (1993), Stine (1989), and more recently by Thompson (1995) and Young (1994). Simulating the scores of each factor allowed us to settle each series. Out of 200 simulations, 3 failed the test at $p < .05$ for factor 1, 10 failed it for factor 2, and none failed it for factor 3: On each count, the results of the resampling statistics succeed to live up to the promise of the single tests.

Discussion and conclusions

We attempted in this paper to reopen judgments on the 13 years past of the European construction. We hold up and then interrogated scraps of evidence drawn from the speeches of two alpha leaders of the European construction to see how and to what extent the received version of the EU construction departs from the facts. How well did our cameo give a coherent account of the EU in words of the last 13 years, keeping in mind a situation that is in any case too complex for any scientific treatment to dominate?

Knowledge and heritage

We must beware both of reading what we know into the past and of extrapolating short-term tendencies into long-term perspectives. Still, with the passing of time, symbolic and conceptual thought content of the speeches of Delors and Santer seems to develop unstoppably, hardly showing signs of resilience (Figure 1). Narrative energy (arousal) is

releasing since 1995 (Figure 3), which suggests that business could be more facile: To the brouhaha of the 1990-1994 period succeeds relaxation. As time is now turning slow, the imaginal contents of the speeches inch downwards (Figures 2 and 4) and the end is not yet. Accretion of abstractions is of a piece with attrition of images, both spilling over into deteriorating readability (Figure 5), yet with a marked improvement since 1995, considering. Canetti (1984) has a dig at the use of abstractions in language. Among the most sinister phenomena in intellectual history, he writes, is the avoidance of the concrete (p. 31): A language that crackles with so many thick words and long sentences is not within the reach of the people.

The study was also on fertile grounds in assessing the semantic aboutness of the speeches. We identified three robust certitudes regarding EU thematics: concern with unemployment (but less with security and cooperation), accent on institutions (but less on citizenry and civil society), and premium put on a new social reality, the EU of regions as the last talk of the town. The "security and cooperation" pole of Factor I casts the net very wide, without saying it, as it amounts in fact to extend a largely Catholic Western EU to a largely Muslim and Orthodox Eastern Europe, a byword for which is westernizing (Huntington, 1993). But, then, can one understand societies without an understanding of what people care about (Sorokin, 1937-1941)? One discerns, in the emergence of the third concern (Factor III, a EU of regions) and its emphasis on geographical proximity, the changing bases of a new form of cooperation (Fukuyama, 1997; see also Jowitt, 1998) which could be in itself an alternative answer to the "unemployment versus security and cooperation" challenge. As to the three objectives of enlargement, political union, and internal market referred to in the introduction, the first is presently shackled by unemployment (Factor I) and the second is being met at the institutional level (Factor II); the third is being embodied in the idea of a Europe of regions (Factor III). Dissolving speech themes into the EU objectives as we just did seems a bit simplistic, but we opted for clarity and coherence to the service of managing EU knowledge over the accumulation of circumstantial evidence to the existing volume of contingencies.

The above big points of the study conceal one momentous consequence. The issue is an epistemological one: Of what is history, so much turned toward concrete and individual

things (Schopenhauer, 1958/1818), to do with these abstractions. Is this unquestionably the real thing? The highly symbolic construction of the EU should not deter political psychologists from reconsidering the profits and risks of that construction. The increasingly symbolic construction of the EU grants European statements the universality they need to travel unspoiled, being made to worry simultaneously about the lost and found of such a metabolism. Can the EU be unified only by abstract principles? The short answer, no doubt, is that it can't: The asset has turned into a liability, and that illustrates the pass to which we have come. There is a challenge here, and a prescriptive role for political psychologists. The challenge is to cause symbolic innovation to succeed while securing the assent of the citizens amid a degradation of the symbolic thought content in the business and management milieus (Galbraith, 1992; Lasch, 1995). As to the prescriptive role for political psychologists, it has to do with reconnecting the symbolic construction of the EU to the polyphony of men and women in the EU. Unlike what happens in the hard sciences where old knowledge is regularly pronounced dead, concepts and ideas of the past of the EU construction never vanish: They cease to matter. As Judith Schlanger (1974, p. 49) has it (about innovation in social science), legitimacy of the past does not depend on the validity of the present. How political psychologists will reconnect Europeans with bracing visions of their familiar past which will be both usable and relevant in tomorrow's EU is anyone's guess. The evidence presented here may give them fresh insights to go from, perhaps.

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Table I. Frequency characteristics of Delors and Santer's speeches[1]					
Id		Number of:			
	time range covered	speeches analyzed	words	different words before pruning	different words after pruning
Delors	25 Feb. 85/ 5 Dec. 94	93	279,036	14,879	11,215
Santer	9 May 95/ 28 Apr. 97	28	73,856	7,202	5,274
Total		121	352,892	16,530	12,534

[1] Either originally appearing in French (i.e., most of them) or available in a French translation

Table II. Factor loadings (Varimax) of 114 clusters of words (second order factor analysis) from 121 speeches by Delors and Santer (1985-1997). [Original French words in italics].

Cluster of words	Load	Cluster of words	Load
Factor 1 "Security versus Unemployment" (7.52%)			
paix, continent (peace, continent)	.60	*CSCE* (CSCE)	.42
communauté (community)	.60	*intégration* (integration)	.41
central, oriental (central, oriental)	.59	*pays, banque* (country, bank)	.40
coopération (cooperation)	.56	*commune* (common)	.40
sécurité (security)	.45	*modèle* (model)	-.40
peuple (people)	.44	*éducation, professionnelle* (education, professional)	-.41
démocratique (democratic)	.44	*emploi, chômage* (employment, unemployment)	-.46
Europe (Europe)	.42	*vie* (life)	-.51
économique (economic)	.42	*société* (society)	-.51
accord (agreement)	.42	*travail* (work)	-.55
Factor 2 "Institutions versus European Citizenry" (7.35%)			
Conseil, Ministre (Council, Minister)	.71	*rapport* (report)	.42
décision (decision)	.57	*Parlement* (Parliament)	.40
Traité (Treaty)	.55	*défi* (challenge)	-.40
Commission (Commission)	.51	*solidarité* (solidarity)	-.42
étranger (foreign)	.47	*société* (society)	-.44
gouvernement (government)	.45	*effort* (effort)	-.44
intergouvernementale (intergovernmental)	.45	*développement* (development)	-.49
monétaire (monetary)	.45	*monde* (world)	-.51

Table II. Factor loadings (Varimax) of 114 clusters of words (second order factor analysis) from 121 speeches by Delors and Santer (1985-1997). [Original French words in italics].			
Cluster of words	Load	Cluster of words	Load
Acte, Unique (Act, Single)	.43		
Factor 3 "A Europe of Regions" (6.15%)			
local (local)	.71	*acteurs* (actors)	.49
niveau, communautaire (level, community)	.62	*citoyen* (citizen)	.49
territorial (territorial)	.60	*régional* (regional)	.45
régions (regions)	.56	*union* (union)	.44
cohésion (cohesion)	.55	*fonds, structurels* (stocks, structural)	.43
Etats, membres (States, members)	.53	*pacte* (pact)	.41
autorité (autority)	.51	*commerce, mondial* (commerce, world)	-.43
structurelles (structural)	.50		

Figure captions

Figure 1. Observed and fitted profiles of conceptual thought content in the Delors (1985-1994) and Santer (1995-1997) institutional speeches (n = 52).

Figure 2. Observed and fitted profiles of primordial thought content in the Delors (1985-1994) and Santer (1995-1997) institutional speeches (n = 52).

Figure 3. Observed and fitted profiles of arousal value in the Delors (1985-1994) and Santer (1995-1997) non-institutional speeches (n = 69).

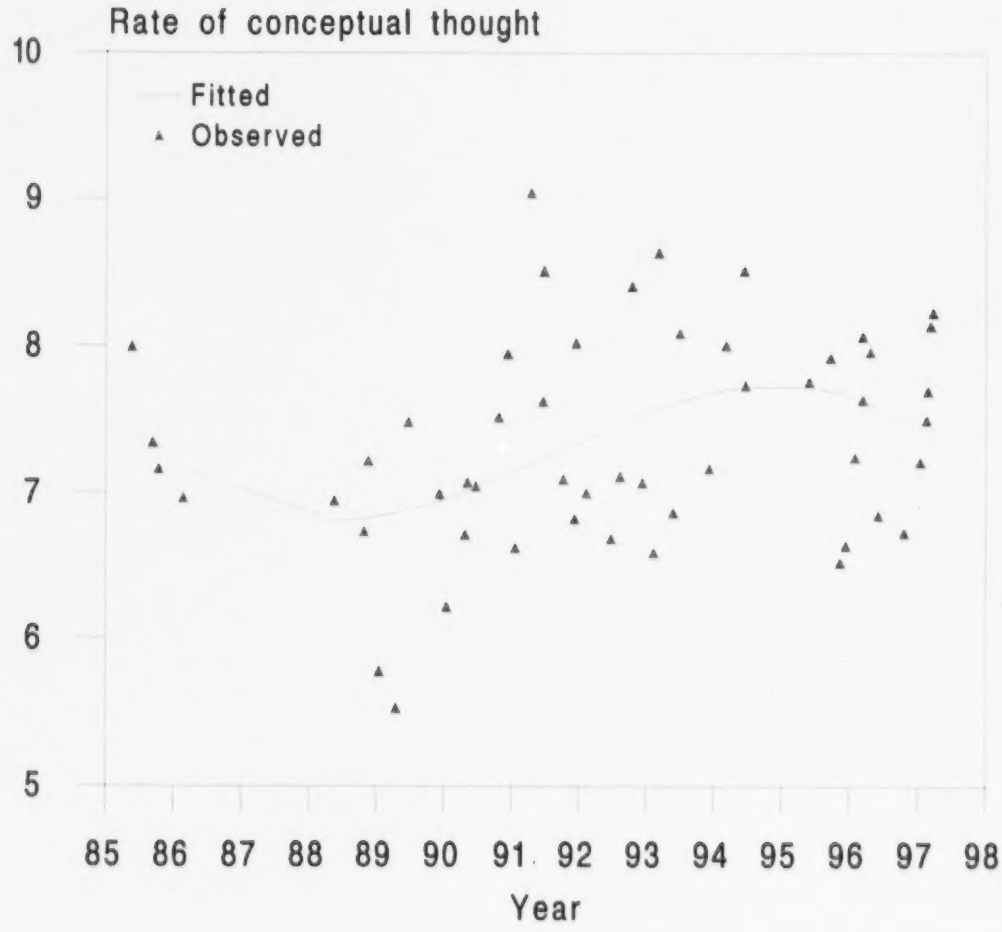
Figure 4. Observed and fitted profiles of imagery contents in the Delors (1985-1994) and Santer (1995-1997) non-institutional speeches (n = 67).

Figure 5. Observed and fitted profiles of readability of the Delors (1985-1994) and Santer (1995-1997) speeches (N = 121).

Figure 6. Observed profiles of vocabulary uniqueness of the Delors (1985-1994) and Santer (1995-1997) institutional speeches (n = 52).

Figure 7. Observed profiles of vocabulary uniqueness of the Delors (1985-1994) and Santer (1995-1997) non-institutional speeches (n = 69).

Figure 8. Fitted profiles of the factor scores of Factors 1, 2, and 3 in the Delors (1985-1994) and Santer (1995-1997) speeches (N = 121).



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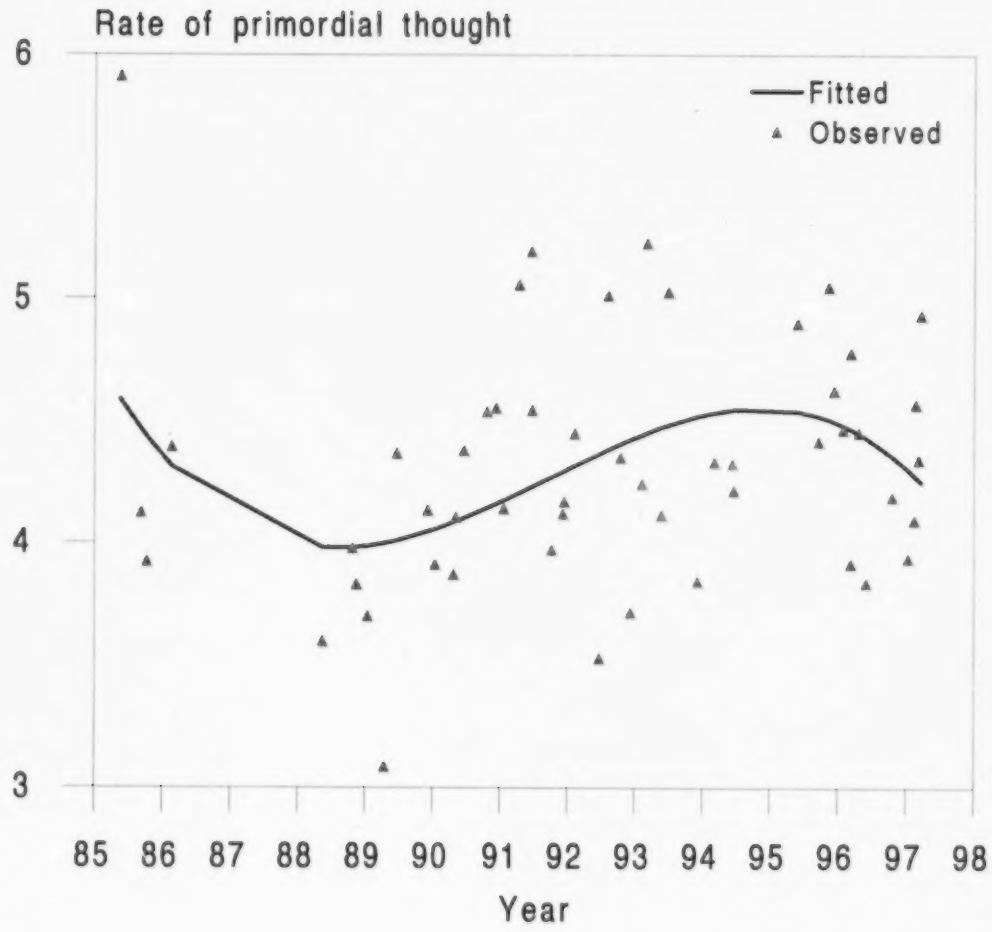

Figure 2. Observed and fitted profiles of primordial thought content in the Delors (1985-1994) and Santer (1995-1997) institutional speeches (n = 52).

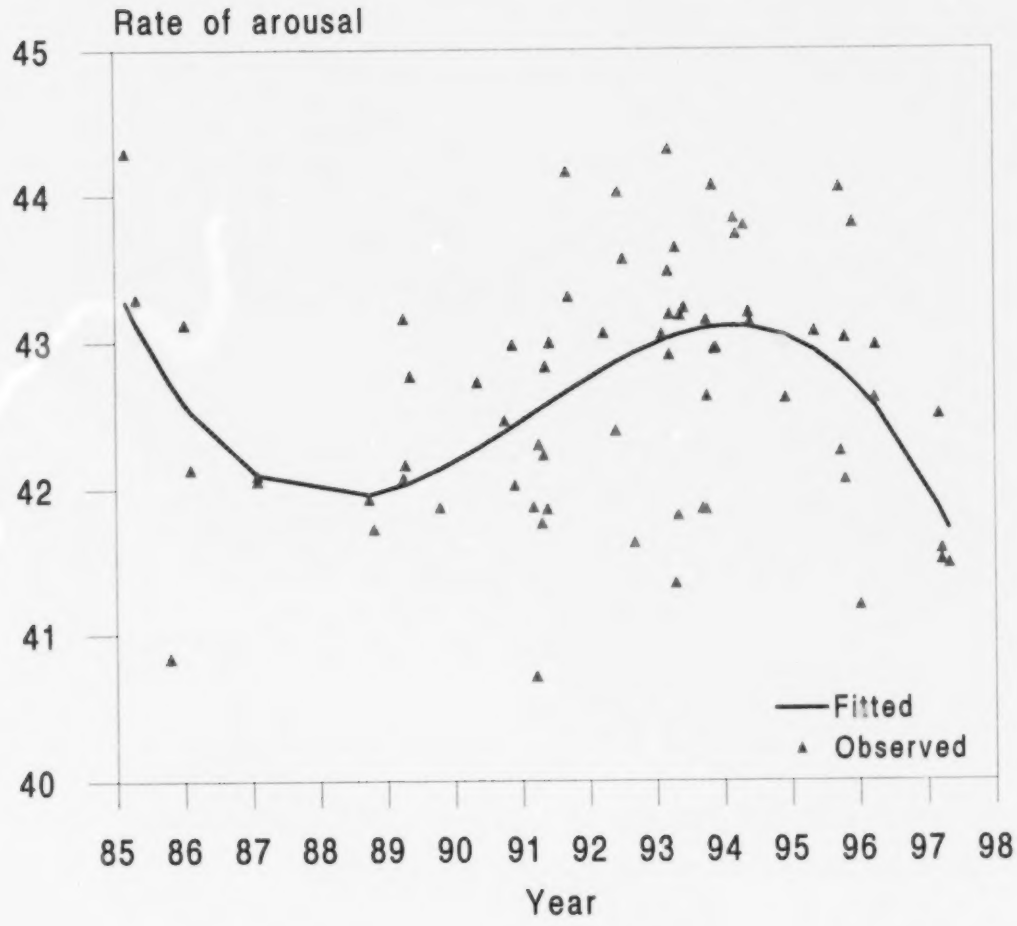

Figure 3. Observed and fitted profiles of arousal value in the Delors (1985-1994) and Santer (1995-1997) non-institutional speeches (n = 69).

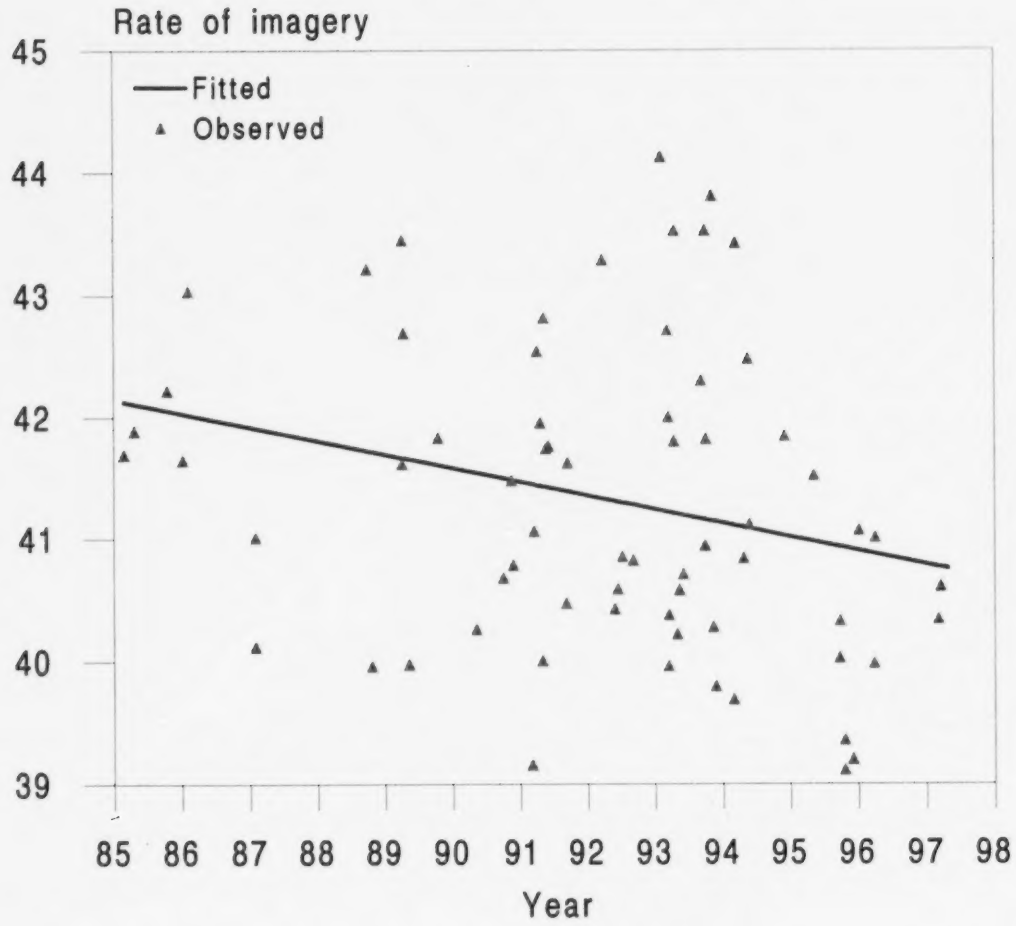

Figure 4. Observed and fitted profiles of imagery contents in the Delors (1985-1994) and Santer (1995-1997) non-institutional speeches (n = 69).

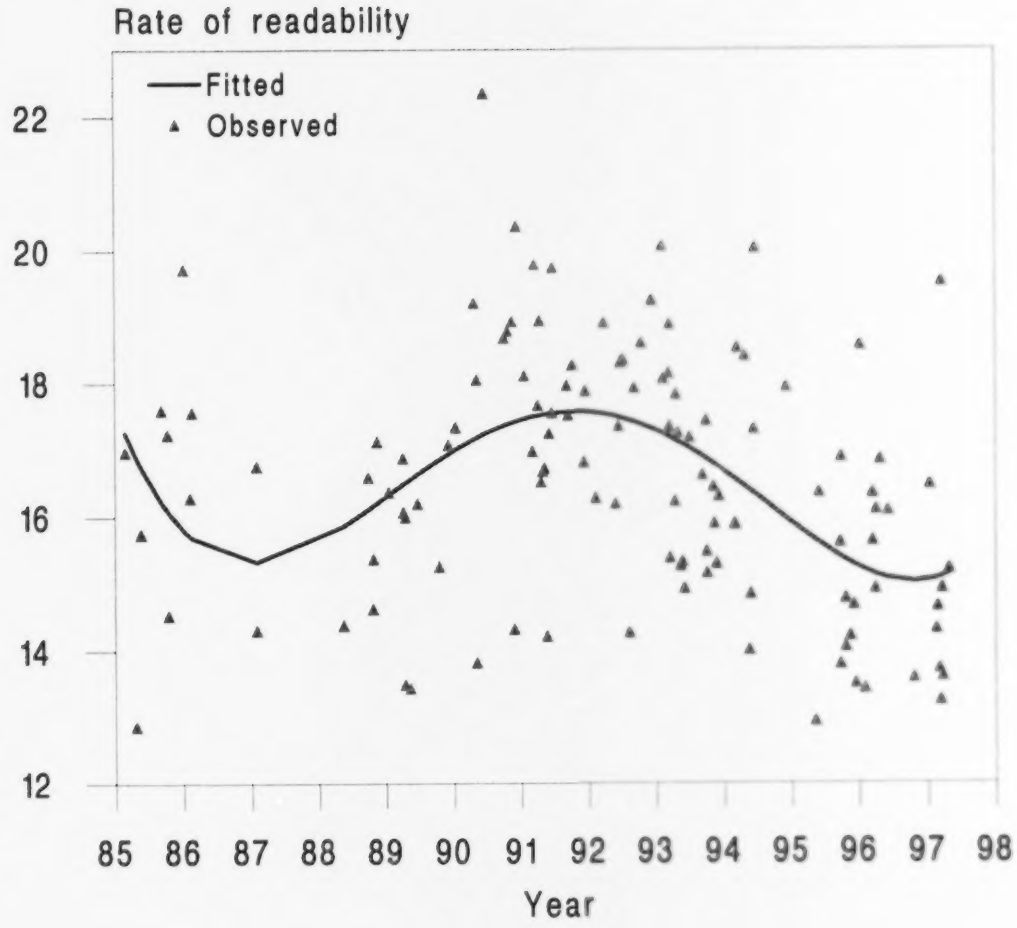

Figure 5. Observed and fitted profiles of readability of the Delors (1985-1994) and Santer (1995-1997) speeches (N = 121).

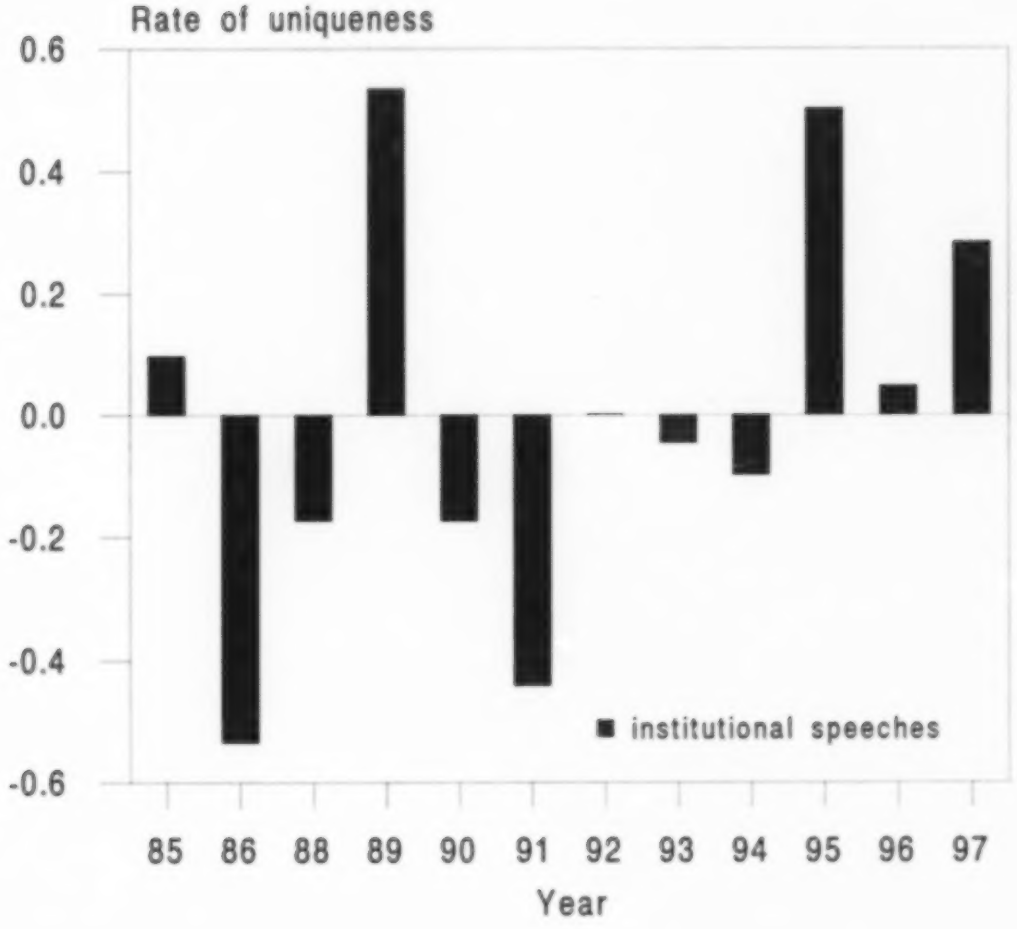

Figure 6. Observed profiles of vocabulary uniqueness of the Delors (1985-1994) and Santer (1995-1997) institutional speeches (n = 52).

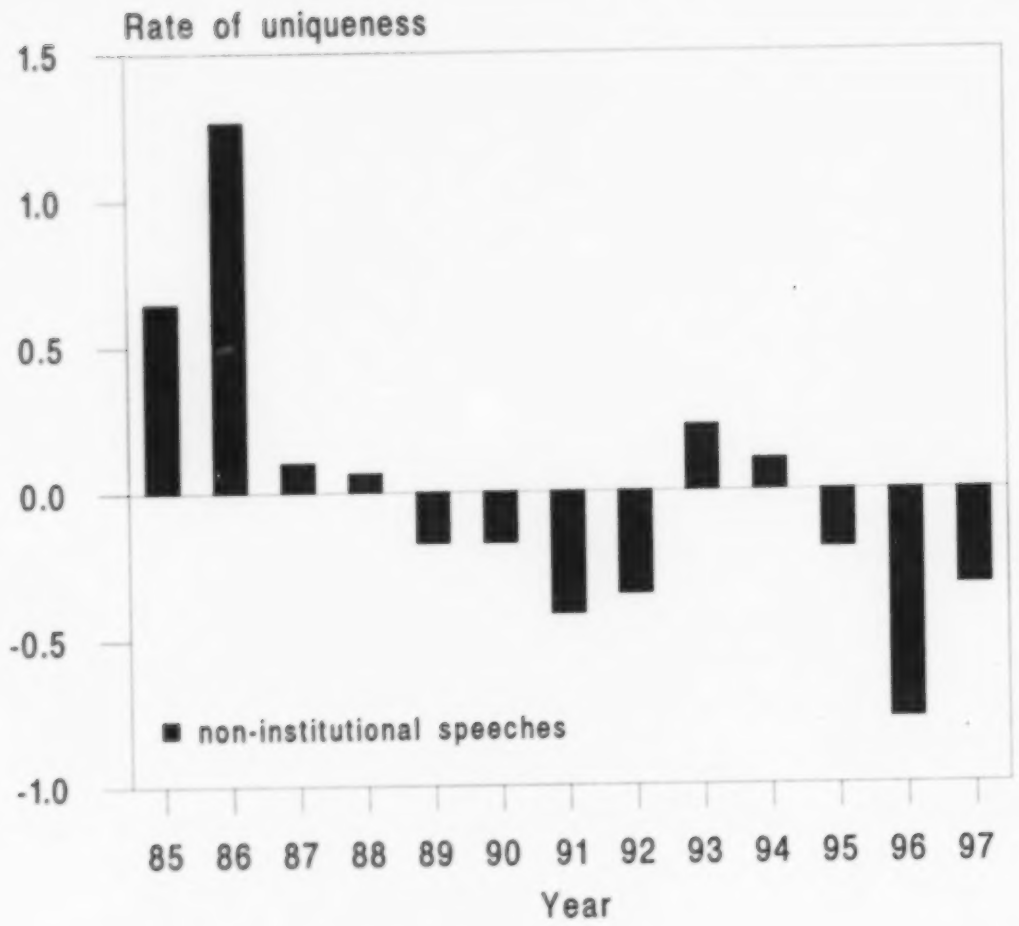

Figure 7. Observed profiles of vocabulary uniqueness of the Delors (1985-1994) and Santer (1995-1997) non-institutional speeches (n = 69).

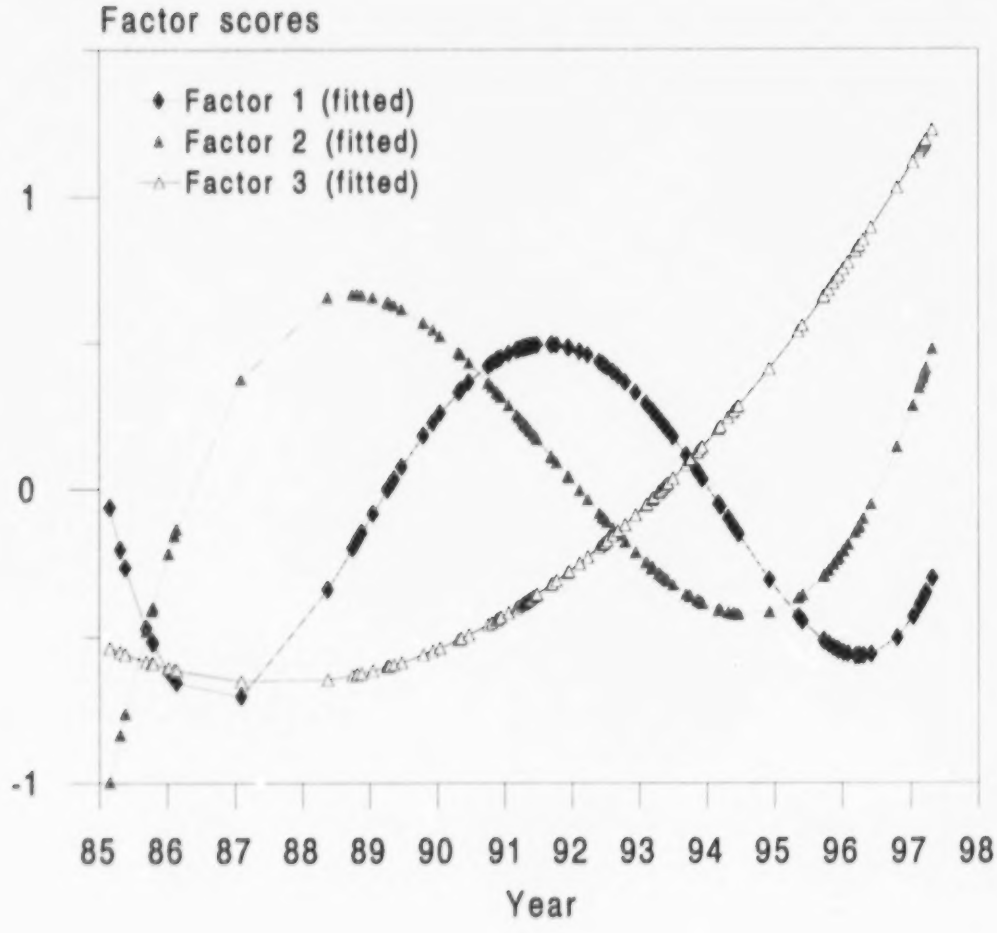

Figure 8. Fitted profiles of the factor scores of Factors 1, 2, and 3 in the Delors (1985-1994) and Santer (1995-1997) speeches (N = 121).

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